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Dedicated to “the real” Mia and Kaz

Sadie Kaye

THE WISHING MACHINE

AUSTIN MACAULEY
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1. The 'Devon Dream'



“Just imagine! There’ll be loads of fun things to do in the summer!” trilled Dad, as he swerved the Skoda around a hairpin bend in the lane, rattling Mum’s nerves and everyone’s teeth.

“Summer? But it’s nearly the end of September, Dad!” Mia protested. “What are we supposed to do till June?”

“Oh, it won’t take *that* long to warm up!” Dad claimed, confidently. “This part of Devon is known as ‘*The English Riviera*’. They even have palm trees! Imagine that, Mia!”

As Dad drove through the sleepy Devon village of Tiptleden, Mia tried to imagine it was California, but it wasn’t easy. Faced with the fading leaves on the row of mournful, wizened oak trees they were passing, her imagination soon surrendered to bleak reality. Moodily, she argued, “There’s no surfers, no film stars, no limos... There’s not even an ice-cream van. Are you sure this is the right village, Dad?”

Mum scrunched her face as Dad carelessly parked the Skoda, battering the underside as he unwittingly drove over a clutter of garden gnomes. Mia elbowed Kaz awake and the family tumbled out the car, gasping their relief to stretch cramped legs after the abominable journey down from London, and exuberant to glimpse their new home, for the very first time, through an overgrown hedge.

By the time the family had heaved back the rotten green gates and wandered up the imposing, semi-circular drive, Mum and Dad looked like half-wits, so gigantic were their smiles.

“Am I dreaming, Dave?” giggled Mum, her full-moon face shimmering with enchanted approval.

Even Mia had to admit it: the house looked very impressive from the outside. It was nearly as majestic as Buckingham Palace.



“We’re home!” Dad declared proudly as he knocked on the door.

“Yome,” Kaz echoed wistfully, translating Dad’s declaration with ease into his own unique language.

“What’s he saying, Mia?” demanded Dad.

“Home,” scowled Mia and pursed her lips. When Dad wasn’t even *trying* to understand his son, it vexed her more